Diese Website verwendet Cookies von Google, um Dienste anzubieten und den Traffic zu analysieren. Deine IP-Adresse und dein User-Agent werden zusammen mit Messwerten zur Leistung und Sicherheit für Google freigegeben. So können Nutzungsstatistiken generiert, Missbrauchsfälle erkannt und behoben und die Qualität des Dienstes gewährleistet werden.

WEITERE INFORMATIONEN OK

Sunday, November 19, 2006

Underappreciated

Given that I subscribe to the law of the dominant paradigm, I have a soft spot in my heart for ideas that haven't gotten the attention they deserve. I try to choose such ideas to blog on. But I can't give all such ideas that I know of the necessary attention. Here are some:

Richard Dawkins himself is by now overexposed, but in his quest to convert the world to the atheist meme he, along with most of the rest of the world, has neglected his own theory of the extended phenotype. Like the metaphor of the selfish gene, this is an insight with many very important consequences. So far we've just scratched the tip of this iceberg.

Yoram Barzel is one of the most important economists of the last half century, but few people know this. Along with the much more famous Friedrich Hayek, Barzel is probably the economist who has influenced me the most. He has had a number of important insights related to transaction costs which I've confirmed repeatedly in my own observations and readings in economic history. Probably his most important insights relate to the importance and nature of value measurement. ("Measurement Cost and the Organization of Markets," Journal of Law and Economics, April 1982 Reprinted in The Economic Foundations of Property Rights: Selected Readings, SPejovich, ed., Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1997. And in Transaction costs and Property rights, Claude Menard, Editor, Edward Elgar publishing Company, 2004.) Another is his analysis of waiting in line (queuing) versus market prices as two methods of rationing. Waiting in line is the main means of rationing in a socialist economy but is surprisingly widespread even in our own. ("A Theory of Rationing by Waiting," Journal of Law and Economics, April 1974 Reprinted in Readings in Microeconomics, Breit, Hochman, and Sauracker, 3rd ed., 1986).

Advanced cryptography over the last twenty-five years has come with a large number of important protocols. Public key encryption got all the hype, but it was just a warm-up. Alas, the perceived esoteric nature of the field and magical function of its protocols has apparently intimidated regular programmers away from implementing most of them. Appearances to the contrary they are based on solid math, not magic. I've blogged on some of these, but there is far more out there waiting to be picked up by mainstream computer security. Of all the advanced cryptography protocols secure time-stamping and multiparty secure computation are probably the most important.

The ideas of voluntary oblivious compliance and admonition systems from the capability security community. These are very useful in elucidating interelationships between wet protocols (e.g. manual procedures and law) and security. (By contrast I think capability security itself, and indeed the entire area of access control, is over-hyped: there are important roles for such things, for example in internal corporation access control, secure operating systems, and services where trust by all parties in corporate systems

Pages

- Home

About Me

Nick Szabo

"A premier thinker about history, law and economics, and the lessons they have for security." -- Adam Shostack, Emergent Chaos

"Szabo comes out with these essays that leave me in awe." -- Brian Dunbar

"Reading material that is eclectic, challenging and endlessly fascinating." -- Sean McGrath, Propylon

"Like most blogs worth my attention, this blog is updated only infrequently. That is because the authors of blogs worth my attention only post when they have something to say that is true, relevant and not already known by their audience. Most of the human race does not have the skill to know when an idea has these three properties. The skill is particularly rare in the fields of politics and economics, which is why this blog is such a rare and valuable thing." -- Richard Hollerith

View my complete profile

administrators is satisfactory, but they are nowhere close to being the be-all and end-all of distributed computing as often seems to be implied. Rather it's advanced cryptography where the most important advances in distributed security lie).

The whole topic of franchise jurisdiction, crucial to understanding medieval and Renaissance English law, has nevertheless long been almost completely neglected. It is also a very different paradigm of the power of courts that has been forgotten by the modern legal and political communities in favor of the Roman model of governmental sovereignty.

Almost any topic that requires knowledge from more than one academic specialty has been overly neglected: so much so that most such topics don't even exist but should.

The specific ideas mentioned are just the tip of the iceberg of underappreciated topics. Please let me know what ideas you think have been the most underappreciated. There are, I'm sure, many, many ideas out there that I should know about but don't.

Posted by Nick Szabo at 9:45 PM

2 comments:

chaosManager said...

Ralph Merkle's work on cryptography, nanotechnology and cryonics.

11:31 AM

Robin Hanson said...

The neglect of topics which require knowledge of more than one discipline is indeed a serious problem; academic actually seems to discourage people acquiring such multiple skills, rather than rewarding it as it should.

4:37 AM

Post a Comment

Newer Post Home Older Post

Subscribe to: Post Comments (Atom)

Blog Archive

- ► 2018 (1)
- ► 2017 (3)
- ► 2016 (4)
- ► 2015 (3)
- ► 2014 (3)
- ► 2013 (3)
- ► 2012 (8)
- ► 2011 (12)
- ► 2010 (9)
- ► 2009 (29)
- ► 2008 (55)
- ► 2007 (47)
- ▼ 2006 (130)
  - ► December (4)
  - ▼ November (7)
    - Are most of us a bit Neanderthal?
    - Are green beards ubiquitous?
    - Underappreciated (ii)
    - Underappreciated
    - Towards smarter democracy
    - A raw idea to avoid being cooked
    - Robot law
  - ► October (15)
  - ► September (15)
  - ► August (20)
  - ► July (5)
  - ► June (10)
  - ► May (4)
  - ► April (3)
  - ► March (11)
  - ► February (10)
  - ► January (26)
- ► 2005 (44)

Simple theme. Powered by Blogger.